GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:406
ANSWERED ON:19.07.2016
Industrial Activities in Western Ghats
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Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Western Ghats are threatened by harmful industrial activities such as mining and if so, the details thereof;
(b) whether it is true that the Western Ghats support the single largest population of endangered Asian elephants and vulnerable Indian bison and if so, the details thereof;
(c) whether the harmful industrial development activities have posed a threat to the ecosystem services and the communities that depend on them; and
(d) if so, the corrective steps proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI ANIL MADHAV DAVE)

(a)The report of the High-Level Working Group (HLWG) headed by Dr. K. Kasturirangan, Member of erstwhile Planning Commission has identified the Western Ghats in India as threatened by harmful industrial and other activities including mining. The industries/activities include 'Red' category of industries, Thermal Power Plants, commercial mining, large-scale building constructions and townships.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d)Yes, Sir. Based on the recommendations of the High Level Working Group (HLWG) report on Western Ghats, the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change issued Directions under Section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 on 13th November 2013, in order to safeguard the Western Ghats and to maintain its environmental integrity. As per the Directions, five categories of new and/or expansion projects/activities which have maximum interventionist and damaging impacts on ecosystems shall not be considered for granting environmental clearance in the Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA) of Western Ghats as identified by the High Level Working Group.

The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change has also published a draft Notification dated 4th September, 2015 for declaring ecologically sensitive areas (ESAs) in the Western Ghats for prohibiting and regulating activities which have the maximum destructive potential and impacts on the Western Ghats
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